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THE  
HIGHER EDUCATION A PUBLIC DUTY.

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT

THE COMMENCEMENT

OF

THE COLLEGE OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK,

JUNE 21st, 1888.

BY

J. EDWARD SIMMONS, LL.D.,

PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES.

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PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

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NEW YORK :

HALL OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION,

No. 146 GRAND STREET.

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GENTLEMEN OF THE GRADUATING CLASS :

I WISH the resources of our language could furnish me some new form of cordial salutation with which to address you on the occasion which has brought us within these walls—an occasion which can only be regarded by each of you personally as a most important event, because it marks the ending of your college course and tells you that the happy period of youth is past and the sober realities of manhood have begun. You have received your academical degrees and you are about to go forth from the halls of your Alma Mater to enter upon the future career which shall give you your crown or your condemnation.

In the name of the Board of Trustees, and in my own name, I extend to you heartfelt congratulations. I congratulate you not because your college work is ended, but because your life work is successfully begun ; not because you have finished your studies, but because you have laid a strong foundation on

which to build a loftier and nobler superstructure ; not because your Alma Mater has bestowed on you the highest honors in her gift, but because by your achievements those honors have been fairly won. For five years under her guidance you have toiled and struggled ; patiently you have striven to furnish your minds with practical knowledge, to adorn them with all the graces that the serious study of literature and science can impart. Intellectual children when you entered college, you have been developed and trained into intellectual men. You have now reached the plane where you can form true conceptions of manly principles and noble conduct. During your college course it has been your constant and honest endeavor to fit yourselves for the life contest before you, and here, to-day, in the presence of this vast assemblage, in the presence of parents and kindred, surrounded by your friends and the citizens of this great metropolis, your Alma Mater bears witness to the success of your endeavors ; with pride and ceremony she declares that you are prepared to go forth from her walls to achieve honor and success not alone for yourselves, but for the institution which honors you. You merit our applause, and we gladly bestow the laurel upon you as we offer you our congratulations.

These congratulations are all the warmer because

you graduate from the COLLEGE OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK, the People's College, which is the logical outgrowth and the crown of the great municipal system of public education over which I have the honor to preside. As students and graduates of the City College, you are in an especial manner the wards of this metropolis. It has watched over your welfare ; it has spared neither pains nor expense to provide for you a liberal education in the fullest sense of the word. This education has been bestowed on you not as a benefaction, but because the City thought it her right and her duty so to do. You have taken advantage of her enlightened generosity ; you have profited by the opportunities afforded you. Freely the doors of this college were opened to all, rich or poor, knowing no distinction except that of merit, no passport except that of worth. Priceless as is the gift in itself, its value has been enhanced by removing from it everything that could humble the most sensitive, and by investing it with everything that could attract the most worthy. Wisely and well has the work been done ; to-day it is our pride that it has produced a hundredfold ; to-day gives the promise that it will produce a thousandfold. To-day begins for you the day of repayment.

You are intelligent young men, and you must understand that communities do not act at random.

If the City of New York lavishes yearly a liberal endowment on this college, it must be done for wise and worthy ends. For you who have profited by the City's munificence, it should be the first and most sacred duty to further those ends and to realize those aims, and I believe I can do nothing better this evening than to state what these ends are, and to counsel with you upon your duty.

What, then, are the aims of the city in extending to you the priceless advantages of a higher education? I have already said it is not offered you as a charity; by which I mean that it is not offered to you merely for your own personal advantage. The ends must be nobler and loftier, based on high public considerations of prospective service to the City, the State and the Nation. But in offering free higher education to her sons, do these considerations generally prevail? Are these objects achieved? In other words, has the City or the State the right to provide a higher education at the public expense?

When in 1847 the citizens of New York, by a vote of 19,000 to 3,000, decided to found the Free Academy, now the College of the City of New York, it is evident that they were convinced of their right to provide for higher education out of the public resources. The great majority in favor of the proposal submitted to them proves this.



Why, indeed, should they have doubted their right in the premises? All history justified them; for the principle that the State has the right to support higher education is as old as organized higher education itself. Trace the records of colleges and universities as far as history will permit; everywhere and in all ages their success, and even their very existence has depended upon the assistance and support of the State. In our own country, in Europe, in modern times, during the middle ages and in the centuries beyond them, long before common schools maintained at the public expense were thought of, higher education was the foster-child of the State. The first university of the world was the far-famed Museum of Alexandria. Who founded, who endowed, who supported it? The State, the kings of Egypt. By means of the State-supported Museum the Ptolemies made Alexandria the pivot of the world of learning, the home of science, art and literature, the Queen of the East. Weak and bad as were many of the Ptolemies, constantly assailed by revolution, no one denied the right and the wisdom of expending the State moneys on the State university. Indeed, if they had any claim to respect admitted by all civilized men, it was because of the foundation and support of the great Alexandrian university.

At Athens, in her palmy days, the State did

little for higher education, or for education in any form. The taxes were lavished on the theatres and wasted on the professional jurymen. University there was none, nor any really systematic higher education. Each sophist, each philosopher imagined that he was a university in himself. He handled every conceivable subject, and treated it as the Muse inspired him.

These philosophical teachers were the irregulars, the guerillas of education. Who will deny that notwithstanding these disadvantages they accomplished much? Learning was then in its youth. But when it became necessary that system should take the place of genius and that method should aid inspiration, Athens would have failed intellectually, as she did politically, had not the State come to her assistance. The great and wise Antonine emperors saw her needs; they substituted system in education for caprice, and State support for haphazard existence. Thenceforth, throughout the length and breadth of the vast Roman Empire, whether at Rome, Lyons or Athens in the West, or at Constantinople, Antioch or Alexandria in the East, higher education became the policy of the State; to cherish and strengthen it was felt to be among the foremost duties of the emperor; to neglect it was to cripple the empire; for the power of Rome was founded largely on her superior civili-

zation, won by the superior knowledge of her governors.

What name is more glorious in the annals of the middle ages than that of the great Frankish emperor, Charlemagne—great as a warrior, great as a conqueror, great as a statesman—yet that which gives him the best title to our admiration is his patronage of all the forms of higher education. His quick eye discovered that nothing would so raise his Franks among surrounding people, nothing give them such lasting prominence and power, as superior culture. Unfortunately his plans were not permitted to come to maturity; but the wisest of his countrymen appreciated fully the services rendered by him to the empire as the promoter of learning. To-day, as of old, Charlemagne is honored as highly because he was the friend of Alcuin as because he was the first of mediæval paladins and the conqueror of Wi-dukind.

A review of all that the royal Edwards and Henrys have done for higher culture in England might furnish the theme for more than one eloquent discourse. But who of you that has read the history of Oxford and Cambridge is not familiar with the many instances of royal favors heaped upon the two great universities of England? Even in the distant days of the middle ages, long before science had begun the gigantic strides that almost

bewilder the modern imagination, English kings and princes had no surer passport to the affection and the veneration of their subjects than the protection and promotion of higher education.

The history of the progress of higher education on the Continent of Europe is parallel with the development of civilization. I might rehearse for you the privileges and endowments granted by the French kings to the University of Paris; I might tell you how in Germany princes and dukes and bishops, amid the applause of their subjects, set aside the revenues of whole towns and districts to establish and maintain their high schools. I might picture to you the enlightened generosity of the great mediæval cities of Italy—of Venice, of Genoa, of Bologna, of Padua, of Florence—that rivalled one another not only in commerce and political power, but in the protection of learning. I might take you to the home of our frugal Dutch forefathers and bid you wonder at the open-handed liberality with which they supported the universities of Leyden and Utrecht. But I can do no more than allude to them as I pass.

Nor can I dwell, as the subject tempts me to do, on the enlightened, affectionate care bestowed by the stern Pilgrims of New England on their high schools and their colleges. Much does Harvard owe to the generosity of John Harvard, and Yale to

the patronage of Governor Yale ; but had not the public spirit of the citizens of Massachusetts and Connecticut fostered the infancy and youth of those now great institutions, who can assure us that they would not have withered away prematurely for lack of support? Princeton College is the College of New Jersey, and its official name embodies its obligations to State assistance. In our own city, Columbia College, now rapidly developing into a university, was established as King's College, and has been built up on the solid foundations of State and city endowments. Throughout the Eastern States there sprang up gradually numerous high schools, academies and colleges partly or wholly maintained by public moneys, institutions of the higher learning on which the people justly prided themselves. If, in 1847, the people of New York fixed their eyes on the countries of Europe, they beheld everywhere universities, colleges and gymnasia, under the fostering care of States and cities ; everywhere the people contributed liberally to the promotion of advanced education. Why then should not New York, the metropolis of the New World, the queen of American commerce, the centre of all honorable activity, provide for her sons the free higher education offered by so many less-favored cities to their children? Self-interest, pride, patri-

otism, a generous zeal for what the world has ever praised in other communities, combined to urge upon the citizens of New York their duty to provide for their children the highest educational advantages. Who would question for one moment the right of the people to direct the expenditure of the public funds in whatsoever channel they might deem best for the progress and welfare of the city? The wisest of men have always felt constrained to follow in the footsteps of predecessors who have acted with the highest degree of intelligence and judgment. If nations and cities are obligated by the same rule, surely the people of New York had the right to establish the Free Academy, and in view of its success, to erect it into the City College. But our age is an age of progress. The simple dictum of the sages does not weigh as much as it did in days gone by. We are not content to do what our forefathers regarded as good and wise—we must know the reason why; nay, more, we ask why what was right and wise in the past is also right and wise in our own time. Why, then, have nations and men always approved the State support of higher education and admired its patrons? Why, in particular, should we Americans of the nineteenth century look upon it with favor? Is State-endowed higher education based on equity and justice? Is it founded on the

principles of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence? I venture to think that it is, and shall briefly lay before you my reasons.

That knowledge is power is the demonstration of experience.

He does not always prevail who has the greatest strength, but he who makes the best use of his strength ; resources alone do not achieve success, but wisdom in their use does. Etruria was a great power when Rome was a little village, but Etruria forgot the cunning that raised her to prominence, whilst Rome learned to use with skill and certainty the developing strength of the youthful giant. Etruria passed under the yoke,—Rome became the mistress of the world. For centuries the great German stock wasted its strength amidst the forests and swamps of northeastern Europe. The Germans were as fearless, as vigorous, as athletic then as when they defeated the legions of Varus, or as when they built up kingdom after kingdom on the ruins of Imperial Rome. Why did generations pass away inglorious and unprofitable? Because the Germans knew not how to use the strength that dwelt within them. From those whom they conquered afterwards the German barbarians learned the secret of their strength, and also learned the secret of its use. Why was mediæval Europe ruled by bishops and monks? Because they were

the scholars, the learned men of the middle ages. For whom did the wise Charlemagne found the palace schools? For his nobles and priests, for those who were to aid him and his descendants to rule the Empire. Where during the middle ages, where in the times of More and Wolsey, where in the age of Raleigh and Bacon, where in the days of D'Israeli and Gladstone, has England sought her guides and her rulers? At Oxford and Cambridge. Where did Germany find her statesmen, where the thousands of officers who, leaving their homes, led her victorious legions into the very heart of France? Where, but at her gymnasia and universities. Where in the Western Hemisphere is the centre of power, the land of destiny? In the land of intelligence, in the land of free schools and free high schools, in the land which amidst its early struggles and perils never forgot to cultivate higher education.

Before the discovery of the Hudson River the Spaniards had for more than a century established their power in Florida, in Mexico and South America, but they have left no record of a school worthy of the name. Their power was used to crush the people and not to elevate, and without a literature, with but few institutions of learning, their condition to-day intellectually is but little better than when they first subdued the natives.



The contrast is an impressive example of the power of popular culture as a factor in national progress.

In the Old World and the New, in ancient times and in modern, among merchants, warriors and statesmen, knowledge has always been power. Hence, individuals and peoples, monarchs, oligarchs and democrats, have always proclaimed the far-reaching importance of superior education; hence, they have lavished taxes and treasures on schools, colleges and universities.

I have briefly suggested why the wisest leaders of nations and the greatest statesmen have everywhere and at all times been the patrons of higher learning. But in America, above all, higher education has superior *claims* to state aid and patronage. Should you ask me why, I would answer not only because, being the youngest in the family of great nations, we should preëminently seek to develop our resources; not only because starting centuries after civilized Europe had become venerable with the ages, America has not had time to lay the massive foundations of strongly organized and richly endowed high schools, but chiefly because our political institutions demand it. The people of the United States are proud that their political system is a democracy. Among us, before the law, all men are equal. We know no serfs, no

barons and no kings, or rather, as was said of the Roman Senate, "We are all kings," proud of our rights, proud of our independence, proud of our obedience to the law. We feel that when we obey the law we rule. Our government is not only a government *of* the people and *for* the people—a benevolent monarchy may be that—but above all "a government *by* the people." It is a government by the people because the people elect their rulers and law-makers. But it is in a higher sense a government by the people because every citizen, rich or poor, high or humble, has a right to be a ruler. We know of no Helots and no Spartans, no plebeians permitted to vote and patricians privileged to be voted for—no active and no passive suffrage. Such is the theory of the American Government, such the cherished ideal of all true Americans. But he who desires the end must use the means. If our ideal of government is to be something besides an ideal—if in practice, as far as human means can secure the end, our public offices are to be really open to all Americans, we must, as far as in us lies, place within their reach the means by which they may fit themselves for these positions, and the opportunity to assert their prerogatives. They may not all avail themselves of the advantages offered to them; but I repeat, if the people are really

to govern, the State must place at their disposal the means to insure their rights.

If, now, we go back to the teachings of history, you will remember that power is the heritage of knowledge, that high place and distinction naturally go to the best educated. In other times and other lands higher education was reserved for the privileged classes, but among us the law knows no distinction, countenances no privilege. What is plainer, therefore? If higher education be the key to political influence, if we must not permit the rise of a privileged class, then higher education (I mean, of course, non-professional education) must be placed, as far as possible, within the reach of all. Surely no one who reads the lessons of history with intelligent insight, no one who realizes fully the character of our government, can fail to see that higher education for all insures greater equality for all, and that it is a most effective means for perpetuating the government of the people *by* the people.

Here, perhaps, an objection may be interposed. Some of the greatest Americans, it will be said, rose to eminence without the aid of a scholarly education. Take, as a signal instance, the great, the noble, the heroic LINCOLN. Did not he attain the highest honor in the gift of his countrymen? Did he not give liberty to millions of his fellow-men? Did he not save our country in the throes of civil

war? And yet to ABRAHAM LINCOLN fortune denied the boon even of a thorough common-school education. No one reveres more sincerely than I do the memory of the great, the genial man, who in the days of our trial stood between our country and destruction. No one admires more warmly his large-hearted patriotism, his clear-sighted statesmanship, his heroic devotion ; and I admire him all the more because he conquered for himself immortality, without the ordinary advantages enjoyed by other men. But LINCOLN was a Titan in the storm whose waves were blood, and whose thunder was an earthquake that shook the continent. At times Providence raises up extraordinary men to achieve extraordinary deeds. When France lay prostrate and helpless, her armies vanquished and her king a wandering fugitive, up rose the simple maiden of Domremy, Joan of Arc, to smite the enemies of her country and to restore her king. Do we thence infer that France should look for a Maid of Orleans whenever she is sore pressed by foes? No more may we look for a Washington in every country surveyor, or a Lincoln in every rail-splitter. It is, it has been, and it always will be true, that by far the greater number of our statesmen, our diplomats and our orators have been men who to natural ability united the advantage of thorough training and of the highest culture. Hamilton, the

Adamses, Webster, Calhoun, Randolph, Jefferson, Madison, Clinton and Everett, to mention only a few of the names illustrious in American history, were college-trained men. Grant, Sherman, Sheridan, Meade, Hancock, Thomas, Hooker, McClellan, and most of the great generals of the late war, were educated at West Point. The majority of our public men to-day, and the most distinguished among them, for the most part, are men of thorough scholarly education. The annals of our country, if carefully studied and correctly interpreted, demonstrate the maxim that knowledge is power, and that the best legislation is the work of those best qualified to legislate. The ignorant and half trained are politically doomed to be hewers of wood and drawers of water, while the man blessed above his fellows with the highest culture has the surest passport to political preferment and usefulness.

But after all, the office-holders are but a fraction compared with the public at large. They are merely the elected or selected servants of their fellow-citizens. In the theory of the American Commonwealth, the policy of the executive, the enactments of legislatures, the decisions of judges, are but expressions of the will of the people. No matter who conceives the policy, no matter who devises the law or frames the decisions, it is from the peo-

ple that they derive their binding force. The people decide all questions raised by the needs of the time, or by the contests of their statesmen. They decide them not blindly or by chance, not according to the dictates of favor, of caprice or self-interest, but according to their intrinsic merit. With the loyal American citizen everything must yield to his country's welfare. The ideal American should be above all an upright, disinterested patriot, an intelligent lover of his country. It is his right and his duty to decide the most weighty and momentous questions ; questions of home and foreign policy ; questions of peace and war ; questions of finance and political economy ; questions of social right or wrong. Yesterday it was the problem of State rights, to-day it is the problem of the surplus, to-morrow it may be some problem in international law on which he must pronounce judgment. How abstruse and how complicated these questions are is apparent. Even the most honest and astute statesmen often disagree in their solutions ; and yet the wisest statesmen and the most learned scholars have no more voice in their decision than the plainest citizen. They each cast one vote. But in our representative system one man in Congress speaks for over seventy thousand constituents, and one senator from New York speaks for more than two millions of people.

In the face of these facts who can doubt that the weal or woe of the nation to a great extent depends on the intelligence of its citizens? Their judgments must be trained, and their minds enlightened, to distinguish argument from sophistry, false from true principles, right from wrong, and the honest from the treacherous counsellor. Unless the citizen be guided by sound principles, correct reasoning, clear discernment and wisdom, our political system will be doomed to destruction at the hands of the designing self-seeker or the ignorant demagogue. Americans have always seen and felt that intelligence and wisdom are the corner-stones of the commonwealth. Hence from the foundation of the Republic our schools have been the solicitude and pride of the people. Every State and every township has deemed it a duty to establish common schools. They were founded, not as institutions of charity, not to help the poor to the education for which they could not pay; they were founded as the indispensable means of preparing the child for future citizenship, as a policy of insurance against danger to the commonwealth. The inspired wisdom which framed the Federal Constitution did not fail the people when they sought the fittest means to maintain the Republic, conserve its liberty and promote its welfare.

But, we may well ask, is a common school educa-

tion, is the acquisition of "the three R's"\* an adequate preparation of the embryo citizen for his future duties? Will the knowledge of reading, writing and arithmetic really qualify him to be a safe and discriminating judge of the grave problems that he must one day help to decide? Who will be bold enough to assert it? No doubt the boy who has learned to read, write and cipher has in his hands the key to boundless knowledge. To him it is given to unlock the treasures of literature and science; he is free to study the thoughts of the wisest, but also of the most foolish; he may become

\* The original of this often-quoted expression was contained in a bulletin or handbill issued by a Mr. JAMES WILLIAMS, who kept a small store not far from Lancaster, Eng., which reads as follows:

"James Williams, parish clerk, saxtone, town crier, and bellman, makes and sells all sorts of haberdasheries, groceries, &c., likewise hair and wigs drest and cut on the shortest notice. N. B. I keeps an evening scool, where I teach at humble rates reading, riting and rithmetic, and singing. N.B.—I play the hooboy, occasionally, if wanted. N. B.—My shop is next door, where I bleed, draw teeth, and shoo horses, with the greatest scil. N. B. Children taught to dance, if agreeable, at 6d. per week, by me, J. Williams, who buy and sell old iron, and coats—boots and shoes cleaned and mended. N. B.—A hat and pr. of stockens to be cudgelled for, the best in 5, on Shrof Tushday. For particulars inquire within, or at the horse shoe and bell, near the church, on t'other side the way. N. B.—Look over the dore for the sign of the 3 pidgeons. N. B.—I sells good ayle, and sometimes cyder. Lodgings for single men. N. B.—I teaches jografy, algebray, and them outlandish Kind of things. A ball on Wednesdays and Fridays."—*History of Advertising*, by HENRY SAMPSON, (p. 513,) London.



the disciple of the sage, or the follower of some Utopian dreamer ; he may sit at the feet of a Solomon, or at those of a Don Quixote. Books, magazines, newspapers, will be daily thrust into his hands and will daily propound to him the most conflicting views on the most varied questions. Siren voices will allure him into opposite camps. He will be appealed to by Conservatives and Radicals, by Democrats and Republicans, by Rationalists and State-rights men, by Free-traders and Protectionists, by Uni-metallists, Bi-metallists and Greenbackers, by Prohibitionists and High-license advocates, by Communists, Socialists and Anarchists, by the apostles of Anti-poverty, the prophets of Free Land and the martyrs of Woman-suffrage. All this medley of doctrine, blown together from the four winds of heaven, will be spread before him like a French menu before a rustic.

The heaviest viands are often labelled with the most promising names, the most pernicious doctrines set forth in the most attractive language. Demagogues will seek to lead him astray by addressing his self-interest, enthusiastic cranks to blind him by flattering his passion and prejudice. Will any one seriously maintain that elementary training alone will fit the youthful citizen to thread his way through the mazes of this labyrinth? To me he appears like a child to whom is given the key to a

thickly-planted garden, where perchance next to the nutritious vegetable grows the poisonous weed. What careful, prudent mother would permit her child to enter such a garden, trusting that intuition or chance would guide him in his choice? Would she not first warn him of the peril that often lurks beneath the finest form? Would she not first teach him to discern the healthful from the noxious plant? And think you the State, which is the mother of us all, should be less wise and less prudent? Should not the Republic, before bidding the new-made citizen select between ideas and systems that may make or mar her, that may make or mar him, see to it that he be prepared to make a wise selection? That his common sense be strengthened, that his judgment be matured and his reason be well trained? That he be carefully taught to sift the right from the wrong, the true from the false, the teachings of wisdom from the plausible figments of enthusiasm and deceit?

In my view there can be but one answer to these questions. Can an elementary education alone accomplish these purposes? I answer, *No*. It simply opens the mind as the eyelids open to let the light fall on the retina, but does not make sound thinkers and good reasoners. This demands a longer and more thorough training than can be given to the boy that strives to master the spelling-book and

the arithmetic. To make sound thinkers and good reasoners demands the training required by the curriculum of the college or the university. There each faculty of the student's mind, his observation, his memory, his analytical and reasoning powers, his common sense, his discernment of right and wrong, of honor and shams, of truth and falsehood, will be bidden to unfold and grow to a masculine strength. There he will be trained, as far as human agency can train him, to discharge wisely and honorably the responsible duties of the American citizen.

If it could be done, it would be for the best interest of a democratic commonwealth that all her citizens should enjoy the highest general education possible. They cannot be too well prepared to exercise the momentous duties that will devolve upon them; they cannot be too wise, too intelligent, too well trained. Our opponent, of course, is ready to tell us: "You cannot give such an education to all the citizens. The college graduate must ever be in a hopeless minority." Granted. But because you cannot do all that is desirable, will you therefore attempt nothing? Because you cannot become a millionaire, will you decline to earn your living? Because you cannot become a Hamilton or a Pitt, will you therefore remain an ignoramus? Surely if the government is to be the

people's government, it is far better to have a thousand well-trained and intelligent citizens in the million than a hundred. Each of them may become a powerful factor in the cause of good government, each of them be an enlightener of his fellow-citizens, an unmasker of shams, of rogues and of demagogues. A hundred wise men will effect more than ten. Assuredly, if higher education be free, many a youth will be enabled to secure its advantages who otherwise must be content with a common school training.

An examination of the rolls of the City College, I am informed, makes it probable that far more than half of its graduates would, had the college never existed, have been forced to abandon the hope of a scholarly education. What is true of our own institution is no doubt equally true of all other State-supported high schools and colleges. Each contributes a contingent of men, who, thanks to the benefits of free higher education, will not only be able to guide themselves intelligently in deciding the intricate problems of patriotic politics, but will spread the light they themselves possess and guide the less wisely directed footsteps of the uneducated. Many of these missionaries of future power, perhaps the most of them, will come from the masses of the poor and the discontented, the men most inclined to take up with visionary

theories,—theories destructive of all order, peace and patriotism,—theories that just now seem to infect vast masses of men in the New World as well as in the Old. These people will not listen to counsel, though ever so wise, proffered by those whom they call capitalists. Governed by their prejudices, everything coming to them from such a source is to be repudiated. But to the sons of the sons of labor, the graduates of the free college, to whom higher education has given the power to see and the ability to expound the truth, who, being of the same social origin, are their superior in wisdom and learning, they will listen, if they will listen to any. Thus will the poor that cannot, or will not, avail themselves of the State's generosity, share in its advantages, and the State be doubly repaid for its outlay.

The benefit of a system of public education is to be found in the greater perfection of its methods, the homogeneous character of its instruction, the untrammelled freedom of association among all classes, and the liberalizing of all the sentiments of our free institutions among the children of the poor. We call our public schools free schools because there are no monthly or quarterly bills to give uneasiness or disgrace for their non-payment. But the people who use them have already paid their bills under the laws of a political economy that never displayed

a nobler purpose or a more beneficent aim than to do all that may be done to elevate, enlighten and guide into honorable and useful citizenship the children of the commonwealth.

The more I study the question of free higher education the more I am convinced of its wisdom. Stamped with the approval of the past, it is indispensable to the present. It is a source of power and of wealth ; it is a bulwark of the State against the destructive doctrine of misguided men ; it is a torch that pours the light of sound principle far and wide among the sovereign people ; it is a force that substitutes enlightened patriotism for blind self-interest and unconscious slavery to the self-seeking demagogue ; it is the only means to secure practically for the son of toil a share not only in the active but also in the passive suffrage ; the only means to realize "the government of the people *by* the people."

The Old World presents no spectacle like that of our own country to-day. Under the Colonial condition, slow in development, burdened by the maladministration of a remote government, it had the stunted growth of a dwarfish plant. But by the utterances of one immortal instrument which declared "that all men are created equal," which asserted the right of the governed to participate in the government, a new impetus was given to

human progress and the illustrious pageant of the ages is passing before us, where sixty millions of people dazzle the eyes of the world with its science, its literature, its inventions, and its power, and the electric wires, invented by an American, which tremble under the wildest tempests of ocean, or burn on mountain peaks, while the whirlwind is sweeping over countless towns and cities, translate through all languages the magnificent march of the Republic into the grandest epic of time.

And now, Young Gentlemen, I have presented to you, imperfectly I admit, some of the considerations which make me so earnest in my advocacy of the College you represent. Permit me, in drawing to a close, to call your attention to one or two important contrasts. I have spoken of the academies, the schools and universities of the Old World, of the philosophers of Greece and Rome, and of the culture of the classic cities and empires of the past. We have the legacy of their arts, their literature, and their intellectual achievements. But the magnificence of their art and the splendor of their achievements were but intellectual conquests, while their morality was only theoretical and their spiritual life was lost in the darkness of the dead. The wretched native of the western coast of the Desert Continent made a fetich of clay from the muddy banks of the Congo, while the intellectual

and wondrous Egyptian worshipped the reptiles and the material objects around him, and died embalmed in the hope of a resurrection after three thousand years, which to-day would have made us the companions of the Ptolemies and the Pharaohs of bygone ages. The more intellectual and refined Athenian, with exquisite art and consummate skill, fashioned his Jupiter or Apollo or Venus with surpassing beauty—but it was only the materialized expression of a materialistic life. It was but the intellectualizing of our being. It was barren of all that could give vitality to the spiritual nature of man. **WE LIVE IN A BETTER DAY.**

The Pilgrims who sailed from Plymouth on the Mayflower, and landed at the rock which they distinguished by the name of the English city they had left, threw to the breeze a pennon on which was inscribed the legend, "GOD WITH US." It was a fitting sequence that one hundred and fifty-six years afterward the Congress that laid the foundation of our Union appealed "to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of their intentions," and "with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence," committed to the future the destinies of the new republic.

I have made allusion to "The Three R's" in my remarks on elementary education. The term so often quoted as a literary monogram originated



with a certain Mr. James Williams, near Lancaster, England, who combined a singular medley of manual pursuits with his pedagogic labors. We may well be amused at the grotesque combination of his literary and industrial toil, but in his day long past he was doubtless a useful and genial helper of his fellow men. If he did nothing else, he has bequeathed to the world of letters a pseudonym which has become immortal, and which will be remembered while the English language shall be used among men. I desire to give you, if such a mnemonic of this occasion be in order,

*The Three R's of the Class of '88.*

RELiance—RECTitude—RESPonsibility.

RELiance—An unalterable purpose and resolve that with all the powers of a sound and well trained mind and heart you will labor with undimmed courage in your chosen sphere of life to overcome difficulties, achieve success, and secure the crown of victory.

RECTitude—Add to the power of a cultured mind the superiority of a blameless LIFE in all your relations with your fellow-men. Let the Apollo Belvidere of your life be a lofty example of moral and intellectual character, radiant with the grace and beauty of a faultless name.

RESPONSIBILITY—The high privileges you have enjoyed and the power you have acquired makes you debtors to those who have been less favored as well as to the State which has endowed you with its gifts. Gold and gems are weighed in scale beams of greater or less magnitude, but the moral and intellectual forces are imponderable, yet of infinite value. You are now invested with the responsibility for their use.

Let me urge you, Young Men, to arm yourselves for the conflict of the future! Put on the breast-plate, keep the polished blade by your side, be prepared for the duties of the coming years, and Heaven grant that you may be found honored among the victors to the end!



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